

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FRANCO-SOVIET "PETITE COMMISSION" MEETS IN MOSCOW

REF: 77 MOSCOW 14759

SUMMARY: FRANCO-SOVIET "PETITE COMMISSION" MET IN MOSCOW JANUARY 19-20. NON-COMMITTAL REFERENCES IN COMMUNIQUE TO CONCLUSION OF NEW CONTRACTS AND TO CONCRETE COMMERCIAL RESULTS REFLECT FRENCH CONCERNS THAT FRANCO-SOVIET COOPERATION BEAR COMMERCIAL FRUIT. SIMILAR REFERENCES TO BETTER BALANCE OF TRADE AND COMPENSATION AGREEMENTS REFLECT SOVIET CONCERNS. FRENCH DELEGATION WAS TOLD OF 18,000 VACANT POSITIONS IN ONE OBLAST, AN INDICATION OF MANPOWER SHORTAGES FACING SOVIET AUTHORITIES. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

1. 15TH SESSION OF FRANCO-SOVIET MIXED COMMISSION ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION ("PETITE COMMISSION") WAS HELD IN MOSCOW JANUARY 19-20. COPY OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE VERSION OF COMMUNIQUE INDICATES THAT WORK

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OF "PETITE COMMISSION" FOLLOWED UP MEETING OF "GRANDE COMMISSION" LAST SEPTEMBER (REFTEL). COMMUNIQUE CITES FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR ATTAINING STATED GOAL OF TRIPLING TRADE TURNOVER IN PERIOD 1975-79 AND "DESIRABILITY" OF RAPIDLY CONCLUDING CONTRACTS PRESENTLY UNDER NEGOTIATION. SECTORAL GROUPS ARE URGED TO CONCENTRATE MORE ON COMMERCIALLY RELATED THEMES. COMMUNIQUE APPLAUDS IMPROVEMENT IN THE

BALANCE OF TRADE BUT URGES CONTINUED EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION. FAVORABLE MENTION IS MADE OF "COMPENSATION" DEALS AS A MEANS OF INCREASING LONG-TERM ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

2. THE COMMISSION DISCUSSED COOPERATION IN OCEANOGRAPHY, TECHNOLOGY FOR COAL PRODUCTION, CONSTRUCTION, URBAN DEVELOPMENT, ARCHITECTURE AND AGRICULTURE. A SUB-GROUP WAS CREATED FOR STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. CONCRETE PROGRAMS ARE TO BE DRAWN UP FOR COOPERATION IN BASIC AND APPLIED RESEARCH IN ASTRONOMY, LIFE SCIENCES AND SEISMOLOGY. STUDIES ARE TO BE MADE ON POSSIBILITY FOR COOPERATION IN FORESTRY AND MARINE BIOLOGY RESEARCH. SPECIAL ATTENTION WAS ALSO PAID TO REALIZATION OF EXISTING AGREEMENTS IN AGRICULTURE, THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, CIVIL AVIATION AND THE AERONAUTICAL INDUSTRY, CHEMISTRY AND TRANSPORT. END UNCLASSIFIED

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3. FRENCH EMBASSY HAS TOLD US THAT ITS DELEGATION WAS INFORMED BY A LOCAL OFFICIAL IN SUZDAL THAT THERE ARE SOME 18,000 VACANT POSITIONS IN SUZDAL OBLAST ALONE, A FIGURE WHICH ILLUSTRATES WHAT SOVIETS REGARD AS A MANPOWER SHORTAGE IN USSR.

4. COMMENT: REFERENCES TO NEW CONTRACTS AND CONCRETE COMMERCIAL RESULTS REFLECT OFTEN-EXPRESSED FRENCH CONCERN
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THAT FRANCO-SOVIET COOPERATION BEAR COMMERCIAL FRUIT. WORDING IS SUFFICIENTLY VAGUE, HOWEVER, TO AVOID CONSTITUTING SOVIET COMMITMENT IN THIS AREA. SOVIET CONCERNS, ON OTHER HAND, ARE REFLECTED IN REFERENCES TO GREATER BALANCE IN TRADE AND TO COMPENSATION DEALS. (FRENCH HERE TELL US FRENCH COMPANIES DISLIKE COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS BUT OFTEN SEE NO WAY TO AVOID THEM.) THUS, COMMUNIQUE REPRESENTS BALANCE OF INTERESTS, EXPRESSED IN NON-COMMITTAL TERMS.
END COMMENT.

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